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A. List of Restoration Activities

The purpose of this project is to reduce erosion and sediment delivery to Soda Creek and the Eel River from an abandoned Forest Service road and two unauthorized Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) user-created trails. Continued unauthorized use of the road and trails is causing erosion (rilling and gullying) and contributing sediment to Soda Creek just upstream of its confluence with the Eel River (Figures 1 to 3). Both the Eel River and Soda Creek provide critical habitat for anadromous fish. Additionally, there are 13 culverts along the road that are in danger of failing during large storm events. Due to the fill placed during the installation of the culverts and construction of the road, each of these crossings have the potential to contribute several thousand cubic feet of sediment to anadromous fish habitat. Several of the culverts are already failing (Figure 4).

If funded, this project will remove all 13 culverts and associated fills from the abandoned road, stabilize two OHV user-created trails, and block access to the road and trails using earth berms and large boulders. The southern most 3 to 4 culvert crossings will be lined with boulders to hydrologically stabilize the crossings and prevent further OHV access from Soda Creek. Portions of the road on the south and north will be completely obliterated, including the complete removal of road fill and restoration of the hillslope to as natural a condition as possible. This will have the dual purpose of restoring the natural hydrologic regime and eliminating further OHV use. The remaining portion of the road will be outsloped with rolling dips to prevent water concentration and subsequent erosion of the road. Disturbed areas of the road and any bare soils will be seeded and mulched to prevent erosion and augment vegetative recovery.

There are two unauthorized OHV user-created trails that are accessed from the road. Rolling dips and waterbars will be installed on the trails to prevent concentration of water and erosion. Bare areas will be mulched and seeded. Placement of earth and boulder barricades will be utilized to block access to the road and trails (see Figure 1).

Portions of the project are off National Forest System lands, however all restoration activities on non-Federal lands will be funded by private landowners and not through OHV funds. Agreements with these landowners will be obtained prior to the final grant deadline.

B. How the Proposed Project Relates to OHV Recreation

This is a restoration project for two OHV user-created trails and an abandoned road. Although it does not provide any additional recreation activities for OHV users, it does improve habitat and environment in an OHV area.

C. Size of Project Site

1.2 miles of trail

0.8 miles of road

13 culverts

Affected area of the project is 35+ acres

D. Monitoring and Methodology

Monitoring of OHV use will be performed by Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers. Monitoring of the effectiveness of the closure on erosion and sedimentation will be performed by the Upper Lake Ranger District hydrologist. All projects completed by the Forest Service include the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect the natural environment. The Forest Service BMP Evaluation Program (BMPEP) provides for monitoring of the effectiveness of BMPs and projects.

E. List of Reports

N/A

F. Goals, Objectives and Methodology / Peer Reviews

N/A

G. Plan for Protection of Restored Area

Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers will patrol the area as part of their regular duties. In addition, earth and boulder barricades will be strategically placed to prevent further access to the restoration area.

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1. Project-Specific Maps

Attachments:

Figure 1
Figure 3
Figure 4
Figure 2

2. Project-Specific Photos

Attachments:

Figure 2
Figure 3
Figure 4

	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Version # _____	APP # _____	
APPLICANT NAME :	USFS - Mendocino National Forest		
PROJECT TITLE :	Soda Creek Road Decommission	**PROJECT NUMBER (Division use only) :**	
PROJECT TYPE :	☐ Acquisition ☐ Development ☐ Education & Safety ☐ Ground Operations ☐ Law Enforcement ☐ Planning ☑ Restoration		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION :	The purpose of this project is to reduce erosion and sediment delivery to Soda Creek and the Eel River from an abandoned Forest Service road and two unauthorized Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) user-created trails. Continued unauthorized use of the road and trails is causing erosion (rilling and gullying) and contributing sediment to Soda Creek just upstream of its confluence with the Eel River (Figures 1 to 3). Both the Eel River and Soda Creek provide critical habitat for anadromous fish. Additionally, there are 13 culverts along the road that are in danger of failing during large storm events. Due to the fill placed during the installation of the culverts and construction of the road, each of these crossings have the potential to contribute several thousand cubic feet of sediment to anadromous fish habitat. Several of the culverts are already failing (Figure 4). If funded, this project will remove all 13 culverts and associated fills from the abandoned road, stabilize two OHV user-created trails, and block access to the road and trails using earth berms and large boulders. The southern most 3 to 4 culvert crossings will be lined with boulders to hydrologically stabilize the crossings and prevent further OHV access from Soda Creek. Portions of the road on the south and north will be completely obliterated, including the complete removal of road fill and restoration of the hillslope to as natural a condition as possible. This will have the dual purpose of restoring the natural hydrologic regime and eliminating further OHV use. The remaining portion of the road will be outsloped with rolling dips to prevent water concentration and subsequent erosion of the road. Disturbed areas of the road and any bare soils will be seeded and mulched to prevent erosion and augment vegetative recovery. There are two unauthorized OHV user-created trails that are accessed from the road. Rolling dips and waterbars will be installed on the trails to prevent concentration of water and erosion. Bare areas will be mulched and seeded. Placement of earth and boulder barricades will be utilized to block access to the road and trails (see Figure 1). Portions of the project are off National Forest System lands, however all restoration activities on non-Federal lands will be funded by private landowners and not through OHV funds. Agreements with these landowners will be obtained prior to the final grant deadline.		

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
DIRECT EXPENSES							
Program Expenses							
1	**Staff**						
	Other-Hydrologist	10.000	350.000	DAY	1,000.00	2,500.00	3,500.00
	Other-Fisheries Biologist	5.000	350.000	DAY	750.00	1,000.00	1,750.00
	Other-Engineer GS-11	13.000	330.000	DAY	1,000.00	3,290.00	4,290.00

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
	Other-Engineer GS-9	22.000	280.000	DAY	1,000.00	5,160.00	6,160.00
	Other-Contracting Officer	12.000	380.000	DAY	0.00	4,560.00	4,560.00
	Other-NCWCQB	3.000	350.000	DAY	0.00	1,050.00	1,050.00
	Other-OHV Specialist	2.000	300.000	DAY	0.00	600.00	600.00
	Other-OHV Tech	2.000	250.000	DAY	0.00	500.00	500.00
	Other-Law Enforcement Officer	2.000	415.000	DAY	0.00	830.00	830.00
	Total for Staff				3,750.00	19,490.00	23,240.00
2	**Contracts**						
	Other-Decommission/Restoration Contract Notes : 10% match from PG&E for portion on their lands. Additional approximate10% of area in private ownership (Soda Creek Store) -- match from them, if any, is unknown at this time	1.000	135000.000	EA	121,500.00	13,500.00	135,000.00
3	**Materials / Supplies**						
	Other-Riprap	1.000	12500.000	EA	0.00	12,500.00	12,500.00
	Other-mulch	1.000	2000.000	EA	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
	Total for Materials / Supplies				0.00	14,500.00	14,500.00
4	**Equipment Use Expenses**						
	4x4 Vehicle	3000.000	0.410	MI	1,230.00	0.00	1,230.00
	4x4 Vehicle	1.000	250.000	MOS	250.00	0.00	250.00
	Total for Equipment Use Expenses				1,480.00	0.00	1,480.00
5	**Equipment Purchases**						
6	**Others**						
	Other-Per diem	5.000	40.000	DAY	200.00	0.00	200.00

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
7	**Administrative Costs**						
Total Program Expenses					126,930.00	47,490.00	174,420.00
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES					126,930.00	47,490.00	174,420.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES					**126,930.00**	**47,490.00**	**174,420.00**

	Line Item	Grant Request	Match	Total	Narrative
DIRECT EXPENSES					
Program Expenses					
1	Staff	3,750.00	19,490.00	23,240.00	
2	Contracts	121,500.00	13,500.00	135,000.00	
3	Materials / Supplies	0.00	14,500.00	14,500.00	
4	Equipment Use Expenses	1,480.00	0.00	1,480.00	
5	Equipment Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	
6	Others	200.00	0.00	200.00	
7	Administrative Costs	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Program Expenses		126,930.00	47,490.00	174,420.00	
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES		126,930.00	47,490.00	174,420.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		**126,930.00**	**47,490.00**	**174,420.00**	

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Version # _____ APP # 700096

ITEM 1 and ITEM 2

ITEM 1

a. ITEM 1 - Has a CEQA Notice of Determination (NOD) been filed for the Project? (Please select Yes or No) ○ Yes ◉ No

ITEM 2

b. ITEM 2 - Are the proposed activities a “Project” under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378? (Please select Yes or No) ◉ Yes ○ No

c. The Application is requesting funds solely for personnel and support to enforce OHV laws and ensure public safety. These activities would not cause any physical impacts on the environment and are thus not a “Project” under CEQA. (Please select Yes or No) ○ Yes ○ No

d. Other. Explain why proposed activities would not cause any physical impacts on the environment and are thus not a “Project” under CEQA. DO NOT complete ITEMS 3 – 9

ITEM 3 - Impact of this Project on Wetlands

Hydrologically stabilizing and closing the abandoned Soda Creek Road would not have any adverse impacts on wetlands or navigable waters as none are present in the project area. Soda Creek and the main fork of the Eel River do provide a downstream source of municipal water and important habitat for fisheries. The Upper Main Eel River watershed has been listed by the State of California as an "Impaired Watershed", for both sediment and temperature, under Section 303d of the Clean Water Act. The State has developed Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) standards for sediment and temperature designed to improve watershed conditions. Removing failing culverts, hydrologically stabilizing the road bed and closing the road and unauthorized OHV trails to further use will reduce sediment discharge, improve water quality and habitat conditions for anadromous fish, and help meet TMDL standards. Implementation of the proposed work will entail compliance with numerous Best Management Practices (BMPs 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.9, 2.11, 2.12, 2.26, 7.7) designed to minimize erosion and protect water quality (see Management Requirements, pgs. 1-2 of attached NEPA document for details).

The Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluations (BA/BE) for fish, wildlife and botanical species was completed. The BA/BE concluded the proposed work would have the following impacts: (1) no impact on botanical species; (2) no impact on T&E wildlife or sensitive fish species; (3) may effect, but not adversely effect T&E fish species or their habitat. Implementation of this project will result in a short-term pulse of erosion, but with implementation of the aquatic Limited Operating Period (LOP) and BMPs, water quality will be protected and the potential impacts minimized, as all the culverts to be removed are located on intermittent and ephemeral streams. Removal of the culverts and failing fills will result in an immediate net decrease of sediment into anadromous fish habitat, resulting in a long-term beneficial effect; and (4) may impact individual western pond turtles and foothill yellow-legged frogs, but not result in a trend towards listing or loss of viability. There may be short-term impacts due to disturbance or sediment entering the stream, but there will be a long-term benefit as sediment as decreased from failing fills/culverts. The proposed work would have no impact on Survey and Manage species, as there is no potential habitat within the project area. While the project may cause some short-term impacts as sediment is mobilized during the culvert removal and stabilization phase, implementation will result in long-term benefits to water quality and anadromous fish habitat.

ITEM 4 - Cumulative Impacts of this Project

The Soda Creek Road stabilization and closure project would have no negative cumulative impacts, only positive impacts in the form of sediment reduction and fisheries habitat improvement. The proposed work is a one-time activity of short duration, and there are no other actions planned for implementation in the foreseeable future. Pulling the failing culverts, stabilizing the road surface and closing the road and unauthorized OHV trails to further use will reduce sediment discharge, improve water quality and habitat conditions for anadromous fish, and help meet TMDL standards. Recent past activities that have occurred within the same area include hydrologic stabilization and surface drainage improvement on the closed M-8 road, and construction of instream weirs and vanes in Soda Creek and at its junction with the Eel River. Both of these projects were also designed to reduce sediment discharge and improve anadromous fisheries habitat.

ITEM 5 - Soil Impacts

The Soda Creek road was abandoned over 30 years ago when the new bridge across the Eel River was built, and has been receiving no maintenance. The road contains 13 culverts, many of which are being undercut and are at risk of failure. Removing the culverts and fills prior to failure will prevent a major source of potential soil loss into the Main Fork of the Eel River, a 303d-listed, sediment impaired watershed. The culverts will be removed and the culvert fill material pulled back from the stream channel, recontoured, hydrologically stabilized and mulched and seeded. The remainder of the road surface will be outsloped with rolling dips to stabilize the road bed, or obliterated and the hillslope restored to its natural condition, followed by mulching/seeding. The unauthorized OHV trails will be mulched, seeded and waterbarred to prevent further erosion. Large rocks and/or earthen berms will be used at strategic locations to block access to the road and trails. Implementation of BMPs including: 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.9, 2.11 and 2.26 (see NEPA Letter to the Files), will assure that potential soil erosion during project implementation is minimized.

ITEM 6 - Damage to Scenic Resources

Not Applicable. The abandoned Soda Creek road is not within the viewshed of a designated state scenic highway. This restoration project, by removing the culverts, hydrologically stabilizing the road surface and blocking further access to the road and associated unauthorized OHV trails, will hasten recovery of the project area to a more "natural" appearance.

ITEM 7 - Hazardous Materials

Is the proposed Project Area located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code (hazardous materials)? (Please select Yes or No) ○ Yes ◉ No

If YES, describe the location of the hazard relative to the Project site, the level of hazard and the measures to be taken to minimize or avoid the hazards.

ITEM 8 - Potential for Adverse Impacts to Historical or Cultural Resources

Would the proposed Project have potential for any substantial adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources? (Please select Yes or No) ○ Yes ◉ No

If YES, describe the potential impacts and for any substantially adverse changes in the significance of historical or cultural resources and measures to be taken to minimize or avoid the impacts.

ITEM 9 - Indirect Significant Impacts

There will be no impacts as a result of implementing the project. There were no authorized system OHV trails within the project area. The abandoned Soda Creek road and associated unauthorized OHV trails are currently providing unauthorized access to fragile glades above the road and directly to the Eel River below the road, which is causing unacceptable resource damage, including erosion and gullying of the glade and sediment transport into the Eel River. It is imperative that we remove the culverts and hydrologically stabilize and close the road and trails in order to curtail unauthorized OHV use and to prevent the unacceptable resource damage that will occur if the culverts fail.

CEQA/NEPA Attachment

Attachments: NEPA - Categorical Exclusion Letter to the Files

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Version # _____ APP # 700096

1. Project Cost Estimate - Q 1. (Auto populates from Cost Estimate)

1. As calculated on the Project Cost Estimate, the percentage of the Project costs covered by the Applicant is: 3

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ○ 76% or more (10 points)
- ○ 51% - 75% (5 points)
- ◉ 26% - 50% (3 points)
- ○ 25% (Match minimum) (No points)

2. Natural and Cultural Resources - Q 2.

2. Natural and Cultural Resources - Failure to fund the Project will result in adverse impacts to: 19

(Check all that apply) (Please select applicable values)

- ☑ Domestic water supply (4 points)
- ☐ Archeological and historical resources identified in the California Register of Historical Resources or the Federal Register of Historic Places (3 points)
- ☑ Stream or other watercourse (3 points)
- ☑ Soils - Site actively eroding (2 points)
- ☑ Sensitive areas (e.g., wilderness, riparian, wetlands, ACEC) (2 point each, up to a maximum of 6) Enter number of sensitive habitats [1]
- ☑ Threatened and Endangered (T&E) listed species (2 point each, up to a maximum of 6) Enter number of T&E species [3]
- ☑ Other special-status species- Number of special-status species (1 point each, up to a maximum of 3) Enter number of special-status species [2]

Describe the type and severity of impacts that might occur relative to the checked item(s):

Domestic Water: The Eel River contributes in part to water supply for Sonoma, Mendocino, and Marin counties.
Stream: Continued erosion and/or failure of the culverts could contribute over 30,000 cubic feet of sediment to Soda Creek and the Eel River.
Soils: Continued erosion will remove soil from the hillslope.
Riparian Habitats: Large quantities of fill can be expected to enter the stream when any of the culverts fail. Increased sedimentation causes stream aggradation, bank erosion, and loss of riparian habitat.
T&E: Steelhead, Coho and Chinook. Elevated sedimentation fills the interstitial voids of gravel which increases egg and juvenile mortality.
Other special-status species: Forest Service Sensitive Species: Western Pond Turtle and Foothill Yellow-legged Frog. Elevated levels of sedimentation can impact the prey base of turtles, which include invertebrates, frogs, and fish by clogging the gills and coating the eggs and fry. Similar impacts are expected for the foothill yellow-legged frog.

3. Reason for Project - Q 3.

3. Reason for the Project 4

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ○ Protect special-status species or cultural site (4 points)
- ◉ Restore natural resource system damaged by OHV activity (4 points)
- ○ OHV activity in a closed area (3 points)
- ○ Alternative measures attempted, but failed (2 points)
- ○ Management decision (1 point)
- ○ Scientific and cultural studies (1 point)

○ Planning efforts associated with Restoration (1 point)

Reference Document

Mendocino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan
Mendocino National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Map

4. Measures to Ensure Success - Q 4.

4. Measures to ensure success –The Project makes use of the following elements to ensure successful implementation 10

(Check all that apply) Scoring: 2 points each (Please select applicable values)

- ☑ Site monitoring to prevent additional damage
- ☑ Construction of barriers and other traffic control devices
- ☑ Use of native plants and materials
- ☑ Incorporation of universally recognized 'Best Management Practices'
- ☑ Educational signage
- ☐ Identification of alternate OHV routes to ensure that OHV activities will not reoccur in restored area

Explain each item checked above:

Site monitoring will be performed as regular duties of Law Enforcement Officers.
Earth and boulder barriers will be installed at access points.
Bare soil will be mulched and seeded with natural grasses.
Forest Service BMPs will be part of the implimentation and the BMP Evaluation Program (BMPEP) will be used to monitor the effectiveness after 1 to 3 wet seasons. Signage to show area closed to vehicle use.

5. Publicly Reviewed Plan - Q 5.

5. Is there a publicly reviewed and adopted plan (e.g., wilderness designation, land management plans, route designation decisions) that supports the need for the Restoration Project? 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

○ No (No points) ◉ Yes (5 points)

Identify plan

Mendocino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan
Mendocino National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Map

6. Primary Funding Source - Q 6.

6. Primary funding source for future operational costs associated with the Project will be: 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ◉ Applicant's operational budget (5 points)
- ○ Volunteer support and/or donations (3 points)
- ○ Other Grant funding (2 points)
- ○ OHV Trust Funds (No points)

If 'Operational budget' is checked, list reference document(s):

Operational costs will be identified in Project Work Plans using federally appropriated dollars for fiscal years following completion of the project, and will be provided through recreation, law enforcement, and resource specialist personnel time and materials costs.

7. Public Input - Q 7.

7. The Project was developed with public input employing the following 2

(Check all that apply) Scoring: 1 point each, up to a maximum of 2 points (Please select applicable values)

- [x] Meeting(s) with the general public to discuss Project (1 point)
- [ ] Conference call(s) with interested parties (1 point)
- [x] Meeting(s) with stakeholders (1 point)

Explain each statement that was checked

A member of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board was present for a field trip and discussion and has actively participated in development of the project proposal and NEPA analysis. In addition, private land owners have been contacted and have met in the field to discuss the project, including PG&E and the Soda Creek Resort owners, both of whom are contributing funding to the project.

8. Utilization of Partnerships - Q 8.

8. The Project will utilize partnerships to successfully accomplish the Project. The number of partner organizations that will participate in the Project are 2

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ○ 4 or more (4 points)
- ◉ 2 to 3 (2 points)
- ○ 1 (1 point)
- ○ None (No points)

List partner organization(s):

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. A representative of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has been an active participant in the development of the proposed project. He has participated in field review and as part of the NEPA analysis interdisciplinary team. He will continue to be involved in reviewing project implementation and post-implementation monitoring of the project.

Pacific Gas and Electric
Soda Creek Resort owners, Nick and Edie Uram
Portions of the road and unauthorized OHV trail are on lands owned by PG&E and the Soda Creek Resort, both of whom are contributing their proportionate share to implementation of the project.

9. Scientific and Cultural Studies - Q 9.

9. Scientific and cultural studies will

(Check all that apply) (Please select applicable values)

- [ ] Determine appropriate Restoration techniques (2 points)
- [ ] Examine potential effects of OHV Recreation on natural or cultural resources (2 points)
- [ ] Examine methods to ensure success of Restoration efforts (1 point)
- [ ] Lead to direct management action (1 point)

Explain each item checked above

10. Underlying Problem - Q 10.

10. The underlying problem that resulted in the need for the Restoration Project has been effectively addressed and resolved 3

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ○ No (No points)
- ◉ Yes (3 points)

Explain 'Yes' answer

The underlying problem that results in the need for the project is the uncontrolled access to the trails and roads. The proposed project is addressed with barricades, law enforcement, and project design.

11. Size of sensitive habitats - Q 11.

11. Size of sensitive habitats (e.g., wilderness, riparian, wetlands, ACEC) within the Project Area which will be restored 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- (•) Greater than 10 acres (5 points)
- ( ) 1 – 10 acres (3 points)
- ( ) Less than 1 acre (1 points)
- ( ) No sensitive habitat within Project Area (No points)